



Fact Sheet

Water Use Efficiency Rule

Overview of the Proposed Draft Rule – How to Get Involved

Growing communities, agriculture, industry, and the importance of conserving water for fish have placed an increasing demand on our state's water resources. To help meet these growing needs, the state legislature passed the Municipal Water Supply - Efficiency Requirements Act of 2003, better known as the Municipal Water Law. The law gives municipal water suppliers certain benefits and obligations. One of their obligations is to comply with new state water use efficiency rules.

Water Use Efficiency Rule Schedule

July 2006 – Mail proposed rule

August 2006 – Public hearings

August to September 2006 – Review formal comments & finalize rule

September 2006 – Adopt rule

October 2006 – Effective date

When final, this rule will affect all municipal water suppliers, which includes all Group A community water systems with 15 or more residential connections and some non-community water systems that use water in a residential manner (RCW 90.03.015).

The Department of Health (DOH) is making the proposed draft rule available now to give ample opportunity to stakeholders to review and prepare for our formal public comment process. The formal public comment process will begin when we file the rule with the Code Reviser's Office and mail the rule package in mid-July. DOH cannot take public comments before the formal public process begins, and comments received prior to the formal mailing in July cannot be considered when DOH makes its final decision on the rule. Once the formal comment period is open, DOH will accept comments until the public hearings are completed in August 2006.

The key elements of the proposed draft water use efficiency rule are:

- Mandatory requirements for water use efficiency plans and programs.
- A statewide standard for water distribution system leakage.
- Water use efficiency goals established through a public process.
- Annual performance reporting of total water usage, distribution system leakage, and progress toward meeting water use efficiency goals.

Background

A subcommittee of the Washington Water Supply Advisory Committee – including a cross-section of utilities, local governments, environmental-interest groups, business groups, state agencies, and utility customers – worked together for one year to create recommendations and options for DOH.



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Tribal representatives also observed the process. The subcommittee's report is available on the Web at: http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/dw/municipal_water/meeting_minutes_handouts.htm

In June 2005, DOH sent out an initial draft rule and changes were made based on comments received. In addition, DOH conducted a series of targeted outreach sessions before and after release of the 2005 initial draft rule and solicited input at its 2004 Drinking Water seminars.

Water Use Efficiency Elements

- Water Use Efficiency Planning Requirements – As part of a water system plan or small water system management program, municipal water suppliers would have to collect data, forecast demand, evaluate leakage, and enact water use efficiency measures (including consideration of rate structures that encourage water use efficiency). For more information about this part of the proposed draft rule, please see the Fact Sheet, *Planning Requirements* (DOH PUB 331-303).
- Distribution Leakage Standard – Municipal water suppliers would be required to meet a state distribution system leakage standard in order to minimize loss of water from leakage in the distribution system. For more information about this part of the proposed draft rule, please see the Fact Sheet, *Distribution Leakage Standard* (DOH PUB 331-304).
- Water Use Efficiency Goal-Setting and Performance Reporting – Municipal water suppliers would be required to set water use efficiency goals through a public process and report annually on their performance to customers and to DOH, and also make it available to the public. For more information about this part of the proposed draft rule, please see the Fact Sheet, *Goal-Setting and Performance Reporting* (DOH PUB 331-305).

For More Information

If you have comments or questions about the proposed draft rule, please contact:

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Additional information can be found on the Web at:
http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/dw/municipal_water/municipal_water_law.htm



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